

BLOOMINGTON ARTS COMMISSION (BAC)

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Aug 14, 2013 meeting, McCloskey Conference Room

ATTENDING: Peter Jacobi, Paul Sturm, Jean Kautt, Martina Celerin, Mary Norman, Jan Grant, Alain Barker, Sally Gaskill, Abby Henkel, Craig Widen, Lynn Schwartzberg

ABSENT: none

EX OFFICIO: Miah Michaelsen (City staff liaison), Susan Sandberg (City Council)

GUESTS: Guy Hardy (Arts Alliance of Greater Bloomington).

Jan Grant called the meeting to order at 5:02 pm.

PUBLIC COMMENT

none

APPROVAL OF MINUTES from July 10, 2013

Craig motioned to accept the minutes as submitted; Sally seconded; motion carried unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT – report by Craig

Unchanged from last month

STAFF REPORTS – reports by Miah, as per email.

Lotus Sculpture

Lotus is planning to restart the proposed sculpture project. Miah offered to facilitate a meeting so that the adjoining businesses could have a conversation with Lotus. She will invite us when the date is set. We are expecting that the design proposal might change and it will be based on community input. Jan mentioned that Judith Klein offered to help with the process but doesn't know any more. Martina asked if there was a problem voiced by the local businesses. Miah said that neighboring businesses objected to the subject, the size, and the process. She mentioned that communicating info about the project next time with the neighborhood would be useful.

BAC as a subject for an IU class on fund development

Kirstin Gronjberg would like the BAC to be a client for her fund development class. Paul thinks that it's a great idea; we should challenge them to find something useful. Miah noted that they may, or may not choose to use us. Jean suggested that they consider using Mark Tschida as a client.

IAC grants

Miah noted that the IAC grants are now out for artist educators as well. Guy Hardy (meeting observer) piped in that he was one of the recipients of these grants.

Fourth Street Festival

Miah mentioned that BEAD will be at the Fourth Street Festival and encourages BAC-ers to come by and join her – she will be there the whole time and would love to have the company.

OLD BUSINESS

NPC

Jan mentioned that the NPC met last Friday and Miah filled us in they voted 4:0 (Sally was absent) to accept the suggestions made by the jurors. Miah showed us images of the higher-ranking proposals. Sally asked if the highest-ranking artists had done anything like this before, and Miah responded, no. Martina mentioned that they have done very exacting cut-work with wood. Miah also mention that the selection

panel had concerns about the material - whether it is sufficiently resilient. Miah went on to describe that the panel also suggested raising the pieces off of the ground which would have numerous benefits: it would appear bigger, it would be protected from snowfall, and it would be protected from snow dumping during plowing. Some of the concerns the selection panel had (as did the NPC) were about durability, including questioning whether the steel would be thick enough to withstand aggressive interactions. There was some conversations about the inside-outside aspects of the proposal and that raised other issues, specifically accessibility. The rule is that the opening must be 33" wide to accommodate a wheelchair so that a wheelchair-bound person has a similar art experience to an able-bodied person. Susan asked if there is concern for climbing and for safety. Sally mentioned that she loves that it is a participatory piece. Paul said that he loves the fact that it is so different from anything else that he has seen and Jan said that she thinks it's the best offering of the Gateway project. Paul mentioned that his only concern was maintenance because it appears so lacy. Mary asked about the graffiti situation in regards to public art. Miah mentioned that it is mainly associated with art on the B-line, and that notably this year we have had much less vandalism along the trail. She did mention that Joe's Animal Island has gotten a lot of graffiti in the recent past. Alain expressed some concern about the sculpture being a urinal for dogs, which would lead to a smelly lower level. Miah suggested that if the BAC votes to go forward with the NPC's recommendation, the NPC would still be involved in communicating with the artists. Craig moved to recommend acceptance of the suggestions of the NPC, and Peter seconded; it was accepted unanimously. Miah wants to wait until it contract is signed before going public with this information. She asked that the BAC please not communicate with anyone until the city notifies the artists officially.

Transit Center

Miah mention that much is happening - the skeleton is up. They were four commissions originally in the call for artwork. One was eliminated during the selection panel process. The benches and bike racks are being made by a Bloomington artist and the city is currently working through the contract with that artist - proceeding with payment terms, etc. The third proposal is for a mural. The selection panel had identified three finalists and asked them to make final design submissions. Miah told us that it is the desire of the city administration to have the commission go to a local artist. All three of the finalists were from out of state. This decision is because of the location and importance of the building. Unfortunately there were no local artists whose work was judged appropriate for the project and so we are back to square one. Because federal funding must be nondiscriminatory for state, we cannot use that funding to fund this project. The bottom line is that the administration is committed to funding a local artist to create the artwork. The three finalists will be compensated as per the agreement. Hopefully by September we will have a plan for the process and the artist. Craig asked for a definition for local. Miah said Bloomington. Abby asked for clarification - has the city ever done this before with the? Yes. Lynn pointed out that it seems peculiar that we have to hold this up as the standard. She noted that if a commissioned artist from Bloomington then moves to Hawaii, he or she would then be a Hawaiian artist. Paul asked, "Since the federal monies have been identified for us for public art, is there another art project that we could still get into the Transit Center." Miah said that was a great question; Lou and she are in conversation - possibly an interior piece? Or a sculpture? Alain asked if this is a fait accompli, or can we, as a commission, plea that there is a whole world of art out there and that this really translates to an inefficient use of funding. Craig noted that the process has been a transparent process and is concerned that we would get labeled "if you're not local, you don't get the job." He asked the question, "was the city influenced by outsiders or did it just germinate?" Peter said that he understands the Mayor's actions because of the atmosphere in this country right now - building is all focused on local. Sally noted that this decision, though, could have been made months ago. Peter continued that although he thinks it's not been done well, it's not necessarily a wrong decision - in other words, he does not necessarily agree with the Mayor, but understands where it's coming from. Alain disagrees; he thinks that it's a statement that says it's only local art in Bloomington. Sally expressed major concern about this decision as it affects the public art master plan. She thinks it would be very important to have a conversation rather than making statement. Jan mentioned that we need to trying to balance potential public scrutiny versus picking our battles. Lynn is concerned how this could impact the PAMP - does this mean we can only grant money for local art and artists. Peter suggests that we ask the Mayor to help us understand his decision. Jan suggested that we each submit individual points that we would like clarified and then she would compile a list so that it's not just a free-for-all conversation. Sally mentioned that we really want to think through all of this before we talk to the Mayor. Miah mentioned that,

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as a courtesy, we should provide the Mayor with the information and/or questions we would like clarified. Miah said that it would probably be useful for the Mayor to understand our perspective on diversity. Craig noted that we have put in a considerable amount of time into the process. Jan said that she would send her points to Miah and maybe invite the mayor to the September 11 meeting. She also noted that that is the workshop meeting from 4 – 5 pm and the actual meeting is from 5 – 6:30pm and then she noted that the subsequent meeting on Wednesday, October 9 begins at 4 PM because it's the grant panel meeting.

Meeting was adjourned by Jan at 6:36 PM

Respectfully submitted by Martina Celerin